July 21-24 and August 4, 2003

Finance and Procurement

Q. How will agencies pay for VITA staff?

A. VITA will operate using the internal service fund model. Agencies will typically be billed for services VITA provides as they are consumed. VITA will initially incur all IT expenses for providing these services and bill back to the agencies. In some instances, when an agency needs a specific individual, VITA may bill the agency for that individual on an hourly basis rather than for the service performed.

Q. If we have a VITA person on-site, will we be billed for the service provided, the individual, or both?

A. The precise mechanism would be determined jointly between your agency and VITA. If it makes sense to bill for services, this is the preferred arrangement. Agencies will be charged either for the individual or the service, but not both.

Q. Our salaries are currently supplemented by local governments. How will moving to VITA impact our salaries?

A. Generally speaking, employees will retain their current salaries when they are brought to VITA. Your particular issue has not come up in the past, and VITA is determining how salary supplements from localities will be handled.

Q. The Governor announced a surplus for FY 2003. Will VITA get any of this money?

A. The surplus of $55 million is relatively small when compared to the overall budget of the Commonwealth (about $25 billion). The General Assembly provided funding to stand up VITA when creating the agency. As such, all the funding for VITA has already been allocated.

Q. How is the procurement manual progressing? Will it be available soon?

A. The Procurement Manual will be released soon for comment. Systems are in place now for Agency IT Resources (AITRs) to file the necessary forms.

Q. Will items like projectors, overheads, etc. listed in the Asset Portfolio System be taken over by VITA? Will equipment need to be re-tagged?

A. Not all items requested in the Asset Portfolio System will be owned by VITA—some information is being collected for purchasing purposes only. Equipment that is transferred to VITA will eventually be re-tagged.

Q. Is VITA a self-funded agency?

A. Yes, VITA is primarily funded through three internal service funds, with small amounts of other funding.

Q. How will agencies that are not general funded pay VITA employee salaries?

A. All VITA employees will be on the VITA payroll and their salaries will be paid by VITA. Your agency will receive a bill for services you have received from VITA, per the agreement reached between your agency and VITA.

Q. Is it true that all employees who transfer to VITA will receive a 20 percent pay increase?

A. No, that is a rumor. Generally speaking, employees' salaries will not change when they are transferred to VITA.

Q. How will VITA training be paid for? Will agencies be billed?

A. Training for VITA employees is paid for by VITA.

Human Resources and Performance Management

Q. How will employees be transitioned into VITA?

A. VITA is in the process of developing a comprehensive on-boarding and orientation process for new employees. "Mapped" employees will become part of VITA on the date VITA assumes responsibility for their agency's IT infrastructure. For the most part, employees will not need to physically relocate to VITA.

Q. Will VITA HR employees be located on-site at agencies to provide HR functions?

A. Most VITA human resource functions will be handled centrally, through telephone, e-mail, and the Internet or VITA intranet. VITA staff will travel to the field periodically. Where appropriate, staff will be deployed to outlying areas.

Q. Can employees transfer within departments at VITA? What is the process?

A. The process used to reassign employees is likely to be similar to the processes found in most state agencies. Transfers will be considered based upon the skills and interests of the employee and the needs of VITA and its customer agencies.

Q. Do employees who are "undetermined" have any say about which directorate at VITA they are moved to?

A. Yes. As with transfers, your assignment within VITA will be based upon your skills and interests and the needs of VITA and its customer agencies. VITA is seeking your input on how to address this issue. Please send suggestions to the VITA Director of Human Services, Velma Ballard, at velma.ballard@vita.virginia.gov.

Q. Which positions will be filled by a competitive process?

A. All new positions, leadership positions, and new technical positions will be filled via a competitive process. Because VITA is committed to the state workforce, all technology-related positions will be competed among state employees before being open to the general public.

Q. Will employees who transfer to VITA have to fill out all new HR forms? Will criminal background checks need to be done?

A. VITA is trying to minimize the number of forms that employees will need to fill out. VITA is putting together a checklist of HR forms and an orientation packet for all new employees. Criminal background checks will be conducted according to state policy.

Q. If a contractor is mapped to VITA, will the person become a state employee?

A. When the position mappings were completed, employment status did not change as a result (e.g., classified employees were mapped as classified employees, P-14 employees as P-14s, and contractors as contractors).

Q. If VITA employees who work on-site at another agency go to that agency's HR office with questions, should they be forwarded to VITA's HR office?

A. VITA employees should direct HR-related questions and concerns to VITA's HR office, particularly those that are specific to VITA. VITA does not want to create extra work for on-site HR offices. However, if there are general questions the local HR office can answer, we would expect they would do so.

Q. What does the VITA HR Office look like now?

A. The VITA HR Division of the Human Services Directorate currently has four staff members located in downtown Richmond. Additional staff will be hired in the near future.

Q. When will new positions be advertised? How many will there be?

A. VITA is in the process of finalizing its staffing plan and posting new positions. Employees are encouraged to check the VITA Web site and click on the "Job Opportunities" at the bottom of the page. New postings will be occurring on an ongoing basis.

Q. How many employees does VITA currently have?

A. There are approximately 350 employees at VITA from the consolidation of the Department of Information Technology, the Department of Technology Planning, and the Virginia Information Providers Network Authority on July 1, 2003. Based on the Personnel Due Diligence data, VITA will have approximately 1,300 employees at the end of the consolidation in January 2005.

Q. Our agency provides additional benefits outside of the normal scope provided by the Commonwealth. Will these benefits be lost once employees transition to VITA?

A. VITA will do its best to match all benefits offered by other agencies, where feasible and appropriate. VITA is also in the process of developing an employee recognition program.

Q. Will VITA make in-band adjustments to positions as they are migrated over?

A. VITA is analyzing salary information collected in the Personnel Due Diligence process to determine the extent and scope of internal equity issues. VITA will adjust salaries to ensure internal equity (e.g., similar pay for people with similar responsibilities and skills/experience) over time. For the most part, salaries will not change at the time of transfer.

Q. Where can I send questions after the Dialogue Sessions?

A. Questions can be sent by e-mail to ContactUs@vita.virginia.gov or sent to the VITA leadership team via the VITA Web site.

Q. Will large agencies "lose out" on job postings and opportunities because they will be the last to be consolidated?

A. No. The mapping of employees into VITA includes small, medium, and large agencies to ensure everyone has a place in VITA (even if your assignment is undetermined). The information went to agencies at the same time, regardless of agency size, so all employees could know in advance of their assignments.

Q. I've been mapped to VITA. Who will I report to?

A. Once you are transferred to VITA, you will report to a VITA manager, who will either be located on site or will be a service director responsible for multiple sites. Standard processes and reporting procedures for operating across VITA are being developed.

Q. Some applications staff report to managers who are scheduled to transfer to VITA. Who will they report to after the transition?

A. VITA staff will report to a VITA manager or service director. Agency staff will report to an agency manager.

Q. What benefits will be offered for "on call" pay?

A. Standard VITA policies for pay- and leave-related areas, such as comp time and on-call pay, are being developed.

Q. In order to save money once all agencies are migrated, VITA will not need all employees. Will they have to compete for the remaining positions?

A. VITA expects that there will be duplication of effort when all the functions of in-scope agency are absorbed. In those instances, VITA will offer employees opportunities for retraining in areas of high demand. There is no intention for layoffs—most duplicate positions will be handled through attrition (retirement, etc.).

Q. There are agencies where many contractors have been on staff for long periods of time. Does VITA plan to move past the "permanent contractor" mentality?

A. VITA is actively working to convert contractors to state positions in order to achieve cost-savings and as part of the overall staffing plan for VITA. VITA is planning to provide guidance to agencies for using contractors for short-term needs and for converting contractors to FTE status.

Q. Are VITA employees tied to serving a single agency, or can they move around?

A. One of the major advantages of the consolidation effort is the opportunity to optimize labor across the enterprise. It is possible for employees to choose to serve a single agency or support multiple agencies.

Q. Can I change my career goals and do something in a new direction?

A. Yes, where it is mutually beneficial for you and for VITA.

Q. I currently wear many hats in my agency, which I like. Will I have to specialize?

A. VITA is open and receptive to working with employees to ensure optimal job satisfaction.

Q. The Governor has committed to no layoffs. Is this no layoff policy for the short term or the long term?

A. Governor Warner has committed to no net layoffs as a result of creating VITA. It is VITA's intent to retrain and redeploy employees to work in other parts of the VITA organization instead of laying off employees. Furthermore, the creation of VITA promotes more opportunities for employees, rather than fewer, through new positions and professional development. Over the long term, layoffs in all state agencies could be possible if the Commonwealth faces another significant budget shortfall or if the national economy worsens. The intent, however, is to avoid layoffs over the long term as well as the short term.

Q. Despite the promise of no layoffs, will the upper pay band be punished and our salary reduced?

A. No. Salary adjustments will be made fairly and are more likely to lead to increases where there is inequity among VITA employees.

Q. I currently support desktops and routers for more than 600 users. Once I transition to VITA, am I going to get some help?

A. VITA is planning to optimize its labor force and will work to get you the help you need. VITA plans to follow best business practices in terms of number of users supported by individuals, and will leverage its labor force throughout the Commonwealth.

Training

Q. Is training still a priority?

A. Yes, very much so. Training is a significant priority for VITA and for the Governor.

Q. Is there money allocated for training?

A. Yes, money has been set aside for training. The project manager testing and training program for non-VITA employees will be paid for by the sponsoring agencies.

Q. Is cross-training with multiple agencies to support their needs anticipated?

A. VITA employees who are asked to support multiple agencies will receive the appropriate training requisite to supporting those agencies. VITA is committed to the professional development of all of its employees.

Q. Who can attend the project manager training?

A. The project manager training program is open to all agencies—not just VITA employees. It is up to individual agencies to decide who from their agency should participate.

Q. How will funding for training be handled between now and the time my agency transitions? What about training opportunities for people who are not mapped to VITA?

A. Until they formally transition to VITA, employees should use the same process for obtaining training that their agency is currently using. Training is a very important aspect of VITA. It is our hope that the training program currently under development will provide economies of scale for all Commonwealth employees so that non-VITA employees can benefit from training opportunities.

Q. How will VITA handle training, certifications, and professional advancement opportunities for employees outside of Richmond?

A. VITA has a responsibility for providing training to all eligible employees, and will not "penalize" employees outside of Richmond. Training and certification programs will be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Will VITA use the Community College System to conduct training?

A. Yes. VITA is looking to partner with many training providers across the Commonwealth. The project manager testing program is being provided in partnership with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, through a Web-based program. As

such, employees throughout the Commonwealth can take the test anywhere. Training that is coordinated through the Community College System will be offered at sites throughout the Commonwealth.

Q. Can non-VITA employees get training if our agency pays for it?

A. Yes.

Hardware and Infrastructure

Q. When will we be provided specifics on VITA's technical direction?

A. Some enterprise architecture standards currently exist for Middleware, Networking, and Security and are fairly broad. These will be refined over the coming year and the schedule for completing and providing the enterprise architecture will be undertaken as well.

Q. Will servers and other equipment become the property of VITA? If my agency needs new equipment, how will this be provided under VITA?

A. Most IT equipment will become the property and responsibility of VITA once an agency is transitioned. Funds for upgrading and replacing equipment will be worked into service agreements, where appropriate. Amendments to the agreements can be made at any time for any mandated, new necessary equipment. New equipment schedules would be determined through defined replacement cycles, and would be paid for through VITA service fees.

Q. Will software licensing agreements be transferred to VITA? Who will be responsible for their costs?

A. Software licenses for applications that are not in-scope to VITA will remain the responsibility of your agency. Major database licenses will be transferred to VITA. Specific software licenses will need to be determined on an agency-by-agency basis.

Q. Where in the VITA organization does the responsibility for LAN infrastructures fall?

A. Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure will fall under the Telecommunications and Networking Directorate of VITA.

VITA Services

Q. What geospatial services will be available to agencies?

A. There are two major offerings of VITA's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services. The first is GIS-related basic infrastructure, such as hardworking, networking, and software applications. The second is in the area of gathering data for base maps. VITA will take responsibility for developing the base layers and supporting the infrastructure.

Q. What types of services will ultimately be provided by the VITA Security Services directorate?

A. The Security Services directorate will provide day-to-day security of systems, disaster recovery, oversee security procedures performed across the Commonwealth, and formally establish a computer incident response team (CIRT). They will also provide high-level guidance on security policies and mandates.

Q. What is the timeline for server consolidation?

A. No specific dates have been fixed for when particular servers and equipment or services will be consolidated. VITA will not be moving everything at one time—after careful planning with agencies, a plan will be developed and implemented.

Q. My agency received services from the former DIT, including on-site support. How will this change under VITA?

A. Service and support levels will be determined during discussions with agencies on their VITA Service Transition Plan. Agencies and VITA will determine what services an agency needs from the package of optional VITA services. Support for those services will be provided for as long as the agency needs them.

Q. Can agencies contract outside of VITA for certain services?

A. Yes, for services not in-scope to VITA. VITA has a number of statewide contracts, such as the Staff Augmentation Contract, that agencies can use only for services or business needs that are out-of-scope to VITA.

Q. What is the relationship between VIPNet and VITA? Who provides Web development services?

A. VIPNet is an independent entity that is a managed service under VITA. Web development services can be provided through VITA directly, brokered through VITA for VIPNet services, or contracted out. VITA is working with VIPNet to develop a guide for agencies on how to do business with VIPNet.

Q. Will there be a standard directory of services?

A. Yes, eventually. VITA is moving toward developing a standard directory of services.

Q. Do you foresee "regionalization" of service delivery?

A. Over time, yes, we do see regionalization of services taking place. As we optimize our labor throughout the Commonwealth, it is likely that employees may support multiple agencies in a geographic area.

Q. What does the Strategic Management Services directorate do?

A. The Strategic Management Services directorate will have a focus on enterprise architecture. It has been charged with setting standards for a consolidated infrastructure and forming decisions based around the infrastructure. The directorate also includes the Project Management Division specified in Code, which supports the IT Investment Board in the planning, selection, and oversight of IT investments.

Q. Where will VITA's application development group be located?

A. Application development for VITA applications is in the Business Systems Services directorate. The size of the group will depend on the demand for application development services.

Due Diligence Mapping Process

Q. Are consultants included in the mapping process? How were they notified?

A. The Personnel Due Diligence process included contractors and wage workers (P-14s). These employees were notified at the same time and in the same way as classified state employees.

Q. You mentioned VITA will have roughly 1,300 employees, which is about 40 percent lower than the count of 2,200 employees previously announced. Why does a difference exist?

A. The original 2,200 employee count was the proposed count prior to the final passage of the VITA legislation. This number originally included all IT employees, including those who support agency applications and have since been moved out of scope. The change in scope accounts for the vast majority of the difference. The numbers have also decline as agencies' employee counts have contracted in recent months.

Q. How many of the 1,300 jobs were filled by direct transfers from DIT, DTP, and VIPNet Authority?

A. The current maximum employment level (MEL) for VITA is approximately 369. Approximately 900 employees will receive notifications that they are tentatively scheduled to transfer to VITA. Some of the positions included in the 1,300 count are presently vacant, thus decreasing the total number of notification letters sent.

Q. What is the Resource Development and Projects pool? Are individuals at a disadvantage if they are assigned there?

A. The overall purpose of the Resource Development and Projects (RDP) group is to provide training opportunities so employees can get the skills and support needed in order to be redeployed to other parts of the organization. Secondly, RDP staff will assist with special projects and initiatives, such as the consolidation effort. Individuals who are assigned to the RDP have equal chances to compete for new job opportunities.

Q. If employees spend part of their time on VITA functions and non-VITA functions, will they be supervised by VITA or by the agency?

A. During the Personnel Due Diligence effort, careful attention was paid to identifying those individuals and decisions were made in concert with the agency as to whether the individual would be transferred to VITA (and all non-VITA assignments would be reassigned to agency personnel) or remain with the agency (and all VITA-related assignments would be transferred to VITA). VITA employees will be supervised by VITA managers, and agency employees will report to agency supervisors.

Q. Will we have to move?

A. Initially, it will be "same faces, same places" and most employees will stay where they are now. As we get into consolidation of services, there will be more movement. These changes will be done incrementally and in collaboration with the agencies.

Q. What was the criteria for being mapped into a specific organizational unit within VITA?

A. Based on the legislation creating VITA, we outlined eleven categories of functions in-scope to VITA and asked each agency to list how much time each employee spent in each category. Agencies forwarded the information to us and included organizational charts and employee work profiles (EWP). The Personnel Due Diligence team evaluated the percentages of time spent in each category and looked at the organization charts and EWPs. An initial assignment was made based on the information available and sent to the agency for verification.

Q. What options do agency IT directors have, now that there will be a single CIO?

A. Agency IT directors could fill a wide variety of VITA positions if they are in scope to VITA, such as on-site service level directors. VITA is also planning to establish enterprise service directors for each Secretariat, who would promote synergy across VITA and ensure the business interests of VITA's customer agencies will be met.

Q. My assignment was "undetermined"—how will I be placed?

A. Everyone who got a notification letter, including those who are undetermined at this time, will have a place in VITA. We are working on a process for gathering your input and assessing on a case-by-case basis what your assignment will be. Most employees who were listed as "undetermined" allocate their time across many of the eleven categories, and it was not immediately obvious where they best fit in the organization.

Q. What if an employee disagrees with their initial assignment to VITA?

A. Employees are encouraged to bring up possible mis-assignment during the review and validation of employee assignments as part of the development of the VITA Service Transition Plan for the agency. Employees may also send, in writing, documentation of where they think they should be to the VITA Human Services directorate, which will be taken into consideration.

Q. When will I know the specifics of my assignment to VITA?

A. You will know your assignment to VITA prior to your transfer to VITA.

Q. What if employees are not in-scope to VITA but want to move? I see this as an opportunity to learn new skills with people who do what I do.

A. There will likely be opportunities for new technical positions at VITA that will be open to the state workforce first. People who support agency-specific applications will stay in their agencies, for the most part.

Q. The legislation stipulates that the consolidation of agencies will occur "on or before" certain dates. Are you aiming for more "on" or more "before"?

A. VITA is definitely aiming for "on", not "after" and not all at once! Agencies will likely be brought on in "waves" during the designated six month time period laid out by the legislation. Some agencies have approached us and asked to come on earlier. VITA is open to such discussions and exploring the possibility.

Standards and Policies

Q. What is the philosophy behind the Project Management Division?

A. The Division of Project Management will be responsible for supporting the IT Investment Board in the planning, selection, and oversight IT investments, including major IT projects, building on current practices. The Division is also committed to promoting an available pool of qualified project managers within agencies. To this end, a robust project management selection and training program will be unveiled shortly.

Q. What are the plans for training and certification of project managers?

A. The selection and training standard will be coming out soon, and will include a program of training based on the PMI methodology. The training will be provided by commercial sources. VITA is partnering with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, which has developed a Web-based testing tool that will be used to ensure project managers are qualified.

Q. How will standards be implemented and enforced?

A. Part of the on-boarding process for agencies will include education and training on standard operating procedures. Additionally, we are looking at implementing common tools for monitoring and reporting.

Q. When are other agencies converting from the state.va.us domain to the virginia.gov domain?

A. Agencies are encouraged to convert as early as possible or around the time agencies are migrated to VITA.

Q. Will there be just one standard for PCs and networks, databases, etc.?

A. The intent of VITA is to narrow the wide range of options to a few that support the direction and enterprise architecture of the Commonwealth. It is not VITA's intent to choose a single standard, but to offer choices where possible. VITA does not want to be "beholden" to a specific technology or solution.

Q. What is the status of the enterprise architecture?

A. Three out of eight domains of the enterprise architecture have been completed, including Security, Networking, and Middleware. The next domain is Platform, due out shortly in draft from for review and comment. Completing the enterprise architecture is a major focus of the next year.

Customer Service

Q. Will all HelpDesk calls go through Richmond?

A. VITA plans to have a single point of contact—a single telephone number that customers can call for assistance. This number will be incorporated into a virtual system which will recognize area codes and route the calls to the appropriate local district accordingly. This single point of contact system is designed to reduce confusion and promote ease of doing business with VITA.

Q. Has VITA given consideration to existing customer support software packages already in use by agencies?

A. VITA evaluated a number of choices and selected ITSM from iET, an upgrade version of the tool currently being used by VITA for its HelpDesk. A great deal of work is being done with the latest version of the software, which is a Web-based system.

Q. Will HelpDesk technicians be rotated and cross-trained?

A. Yes. VITA is following the ITIL framework and standards, which encourages the cross-training of individuals to ensure support is in place. The VITA HelpDesk is more than taking messages—we are going to raise the bar on customer service in the Commonwealth.

Q. What is the role of the service level director in establishing the VITA's relationship with its customer agencies?

A. The service level director plays an important role during the development of VITA's Service Transition Plan with an agency, and will likely be the best person to handle discussions regarding the plan.